



July 31, 2025

Special Provisions and Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program

If you are a new CEP district or if you are starting a new cycle, please make sure to complete your Web Application for SY 25-26 as a CEP district and attach your signed Policy Statement. Also check your claims for the correct percentages on your free and paid meals based on your CEP schedule.



Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) recipients for 25/26 SY have been sent an award letter via email. The complete awardees list will be available on the **FFVP webpage** soon. Participants should start giving students FFVP snacks as soon as possible in the new school year to use your allotted grant money percentage available through the end of September. Each student was allocated \$52.87 for the 25/26 SY for approved LEAs.

Base Year Provision 2 districts should collect as many free and reduced meal applications as you can and run DirectMatch reports weekly to ensure the highest free and reduced numbers possible in your base year. Second year districts watch your claims to make sure you are reimbursed at the correct free and reduced numbers as your schedule reflects.



2025-2026 School Year Reimbursement Rates

You can find the 2025-2026 School Year Reimbursement Rates in the chart below
or on our DESE, FNS Reimbursement Rates webpage.

National School Lunch Program

	Less than 60%	60% or More	Less than 60% + 9 Cents	60% or More + 9 Cents
Paid	\$.44	\$.46	\$.53	\$.55
Reduced Price	\$4.20	\$4.22	\$4.29	\$4.31
Free	\$4.60	\$4.62	\$4.69	\$4.71

School Breakfast Program

	Non-Severe Need	Severe Need
Paid	\$.40	\$.40
Reduced Price	\$2.16	\$2.64
Free	\$2.46	\$2.94

After School Snack Program

Paid	\$.11
Reduced Price	\$.63
Free	\$1.26

Special Milk Program

Paid	\$.2675
Free	Average Cost per 1/2 pint

Donated Foods Program

per student lunch \$.44

Important School Nutrition Requirements, Resources & Reminders

Food Service Management Company (FSMC) Reminder

FSMC renewals AND monitoring forms are due to Kyle.Heislen@dese.mo.gov as soon as possible (if you have not already done so). Our DESE, Food and Nutrition services staff is working on approving SY 25/26 LEA Application Packets and the renewal document and monitoring form needs to be either uploaded into web applications or **emailed to Kyle**. Application packets may not be approved until renewals are monitoring forms are received.

SP18-2025 Guidance on Fees for Electronic Payments in School Meal Programs

This memorandum provides revised guidance for school food authorities (SFAs) participating in the school meal programs regarding fees charged when families use electronic payment services to add money to school meal accounts. It also reminds SFAs that they must offer a free and accessible method for all families to add money to school

meal accounts. This refreshed guidance reduces administrative burden and clarifies statutory, regulatory, and administrative requirements.

This memorandum rescinds, effective immediately, SP 04-2025 *Fees for Electronic Payment Services in the School Meal Programs*, issued on Nov. 1, 2024, and supersedes SP 02-2015: *Online Fees in the School Meal Programs*, issued on Oct. 8, 2014.

Paid Lunch Equity (PLE) Guidance and Tool- Under the 2025 Appropriations Act, for SY 2025-2026, only LEAs that had a negative balance in the nonprofit school food service account as of June 30, 2024, shall be required to establish a price for paid lunches according to the PLE provisions. Schools may use the **PLE exemption survey** and the **PLE tool for school year 2025-2026**.

Free and Reduced Price Application and Direct Certification Information and Procedures 2025-26- is now available on the **DESE Food and Nutrition Services** website under **Free and Reduced Price Information** and **Handbooks**. Please refer to the **Free and Reduced Application and Direct Certification Information and Procedures** and the **Frequently Asked Questions** document pertaining to the Free and Reduced Application process.

Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025: Effect on Child Nutrition Programs- On May 14, 2025, FNS released **SP 13-2025**. Consistent with the guiding principles regarding nutrition programs identified by U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Brooke Rollins to clarify statutory, regulatory, and administrative requirements, this memo, attached, provides guidance from the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025 (Public Law 119-4).

Urban School Food Alliance (USFA)

The **2025 K12 Specification Guide** is a resource for school foodservice programs of all sizes for aiding in the development of good procurement practices. This handbook helps foodservice leadership write thorough specifications and standards by defining what's included in a specification, providing standards used by USFA members, and sharing examples of specifications - from NAE Chicken Patties to a compostable five-compartment tray. The **Center for Good Food Purchasing** is another valuable resource.

Excess Balance

The Food Service Account is a “non-profit” account or fund, this means that the account is allowed to carry a three month average operating cost.

Example of calculating an excess balance:

- We calculate an excess balance by taking the closing balance (i.e. \$411,211.15) and subtracting the three month balance (i.e. \$225,968.28). This gives you the excess balance that you need to “spend down”. If the LEA receives an Excess Balance Letter- the LEA must respond with a written (on district letter head) plan on how the excess funds will be spent.
 - To bring the balance in line with program requirements, we suggest immediate consideration of one or more of the following: (1) improve the quality of food offered; (2) purchase needed movable equipment items and supplies; (3) pay expenses for food service personnel to attend workshops, conferences, or trainings; and (4) to achieve compliance with the Healthy Hunger Kids Free Act you may not arbitrarily divert funds accumulated in your food service operation; however, you may consider indirect cost recovery. (5) Paid Lunch Equity Exemption

If your LEA has an excess balance on the SY 23-24 School Nutrition Program Financial Report, the Authorized Representative should have received a notification letter from Heidi Garlin. The LEA will need to submit the written response/plan for reducing the program balance and the estimated date of completion. After the excess balance is depleted, the LEA must submit detailed documentation explaining steps used to reduce expenditure with the amounts expended and all receipts if applicable.

If spend down plans include Capital Expenditures (per 2 CFR 200.1), a Capital Expenditure Request must also be submitted and approved. Note: The equipment threshold for the State of Missouri increased to \$5,000.

Farm to School

Local Food for Schools (LFS) Grant

The LFS grant was **NOT** impacted by the federal termination of grant programs. DESE **will continue** to operate and distribute funds for this current LFS grant. DESE **will not** be receiving Local Food for Schools and Child Care (LFSCC), this grant was terminated. These are two separate grants.

Please review our recent **Let's Talk Tuesday Webinar on LFS** for additional information and how to apply for available funding.

How to Apply:

1. Review the training recording.
2. Complete the request for applications.
3. Submit written plan describing how you will spend the funds.

Scan the QR code to get started!



MO DESE Food & Nutrition Services
foodandnutritionservices@dese.mo.gov

Summer 2025 SuN Bucks Data Collection Info and Resources

If your LEA has already uploaded the completed spreadsheet into Tiered Monitoring – THANK YOU! We are working through these as quickly as possible and will contact you if we have any changes or questions. Please submit your spreadsheet by September 1st if not already completed.

DESE's Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) team has created several **Summer EBT Student Data Collection resources** to help LEAs complete this required student data collection. LEAs **must** use the **spreadsheet template** to submit this directory data. Please carefully review the **Letter to Schools** and **Frequently Asked Questions**. The instructional documents are available either in **PDF** or a **recorded webinar**.

The Data Collection Spreadsheet must be completed and include *Streamlined Certified* students **only** for the distribution of Summer 2025 EBT benefits to eligible children.

On the spreadsheet template for the LEA contact information, please only fill in B1, the school district code cell. You can leave cells B2 and B3 blank. Email us at sebt@dese.mo.gov once you have also completed the student data and uploaded the spreadsheet into Tiered Monitoring with your contact name, phone number and school district name.

Streamlined Certified Students

Students that were determined eligible for FRL at some point during the 2024-2025 school year are considered “Streamlined Certified”, meaning the student’s household does not need to apply for summer EBT; they will automatically receive the benefit. Streamlined Certified students include:

- Students determined FRL eligible through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP)/School Breakfast Program (SBP) application
- Students Directly Certified through SNAP or TANF using the Direct Certification Download (Direct Match)
- Students in foster care
- Students in a homeless, migrant, or runaway status

The **Missouri SuN Bucks Program** is a program to help families purchase food for their school-age children during the 2025 summer months of June, July, and August.

School personnel with questions about the data collection process described above may contact Michelle Graziano at 573-751-7564, Brittany Otto at 573-751-3526 or sebt@dese.mo.gov. Families and other stakeholders with questions about the Missouri SuN Bucks Program should **contact DSS directly**.

USDA Foods Update

Value Letters

The SY 24-25 Value Letters have been posted on our DESE website and an email was sent to your authorized representative informing them that the letter is available at **SY 24-25**

Value Letter This letter provides the value of all USDA Foods that were delivered to your district during this past school year. This includes Direct Delivery (brown box), DOD Fresh, Fee For Service and Net Off Invoice entitlement. It also includes any bonus entitlement received during the year.

Entitlement Estimation Letters

The calculated per meal rate for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) school year 2025/26 is \$.4400 which is a decrease from the previous rate of \$.56 in SY 2024/25.

USDA Foods Entitlement for SY 25/26 has been calculated using the \$.44 meal rate multiplied by total lunches served for your district in SY 23/24. LEA Entitlement Letters are now available on the USDA Foods website (**SY 25-26 Entitlement Estimation Letter**).

Let’s Talk Tuesdays
Return

*“USDA Foods Essentials
for the New School Year”*

September 23, 2:00 PM



We are offering a webinar to introduce our new USDA Foods Team Director, showcase new commodity products, review new procedures, and provide additional information to make your school year a smooth one.

Cancellations, Delays and Substitutions

While most of our direct delivery foods (brown box) are being delivered as scheduled, we have some products that have been delayed or returned by AMS to be rebid. If there are direct delivery items you requested on your packet, but have not received as scheduled, please consult the Canceled and Adjusted Direct Delivery (Brown Box) Orders under News and Updates Section on the [USDA Foods page](#).

We will have a delay in deliveries until November on a few products:

- Pears, Diced Canned (100225)
- Corn, Frozen (100348)
- Apple, slices (100206)
- Turkey Roast (100125)
- Beef, Fine Ground (100158)
- Beans, Refried (100362)
- Turkey Breast Smkd Slc (111882)
- Turkey Bread Deli Sliced (111900)

Net Off Invoice Reminders

Your NOI banks for the upcoming school year should be loaded, so please check Processor Link and K12 to make sure that you received the pounds you requested.

Please also take a few moments to make sure that your commercial distributor is listed correctly in Processor Link and K12. Confirming this will help ensure that as you place your orders, the donated foods value will be subtracted from your invoices.

August Deliveries

The beginning of school is here, and many of you will be receiving your first warehouse delivery for SY 25/26. Please remember to schedule your monthly delivery for your Direct Delivery and Fee For Service items by the Tuesday prior to your delivery week so that you can receive your products in a timely manner! ***Also, please remember that this year, all cheeses – sliced, shredded, sticks and Peanut Butter - will be automatically shipped to your district in the month requested on your USDA Foods Packet.***

Bonus Direct Delivery for 25/26 SY

We are again offering Bonus Direct Delivery (brown box) items that you may select and add to your Gold Star orders. We currently have 11 different products available and are adding more weekly as they arrive.

To request bonus items, log into the [Gold Star website](#). On the left panel, click on Advertisements under the USDA Direct Delivery Header. Then request the items and quantities you would like. Bonus items, once approved, will be added to your Live Inventory, and automatically shipped to your district on your next Gold Star delivery.

More information and instructions on this advertisement feature can be found on the USDA Foods website under [Gold Star Training Videos – Advertisements](#).

DOD Updates

To ensure a smooth transition this fall, please make sure that your district's contact information is up to date in FFAVORS. If any changes need to be made, please send those to donatedfoods@dese.mo.gov. Each district's account has been loaded with their allocated funds for the 25/26 SY. This means that you should be able to place orders as soon as you get back to school in August!

Bonus DOD

Bonus DOD dollars are available in limited quantities. If you would like to request Bonus DOD entitlement, please use the [DOD Funds Request Form](#) with the amount you would like to request.

Past Newsletters

Missed a past newsletter or need to access them again? You can find them all on our [Food and Nutrition Services Newsletter page](#)!



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